

BREEDERS

A FILM BY THE CENTER FOR BIOETHICS AND CULTURE



a subclass of women?

PRESS KIT

Press Inquiries, contact:

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FILM TITLE:

Breeders: A Subclass Of Women?

LOG LINE:

Is surrogacy a beautiful, loving act or does it simply degrade pregnancy to a service and a baby to a product?

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TECHNICAL INFO:

Running Time: 52 minutes

Exhibition Format: DVD

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Shooting Format: HD

Color, English

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WHOLESALE DVD SALES & U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST INQUIRIES:

Please contact the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network for all inquiries regarding wholesale DVD sales.

Broadcast rights are also available through the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network.

EDUCATIONAL INQUIRIES:

Educational Licensing for *BREEDERS* is available through the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network.

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COMMUNITY & FESTIVAL SCREENING INQUIRIES:

We encourage university, civic, church, and local community groups to use this film for outreach and engagement on the important issues addressed in the film. Curriculum is available for free download to facilitate discussions at film screenings. Please contact the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network for public performance rights.

SYNOPSIS SHORT:

Surrogacy is fast becoming one of the major issues of the 21st century—celebrities and everyday people are increasingly using surrogates to build their families. But the practice is fraught with complex implications for women, children, *and* families. What is the impact on the women who serve as surrogates and on the children who are born from surrogacy? In what ways might money complicate things? What about altruistic surrogacy done for a family member or close friend? Is surrogacy a beautiful, loving act or does it simply degrade pregnancy to a service and a baby to a product? Can we find a middle ground? Should we even look for one?

CREDITS:

Lead Producer
Jennifer Lahl

Producer
Matthew Eppinette

Directors
Jennifer Lahl and Matthew Eppinette

Director of Photography
Cameron P. Shaw

Editor
Brendan Kruse

Writers
Jennifer Lahl and Matthew Eppinette

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PRESS RELEASE:

New Documentary Bravely Probes Surrogacy's Complexities and Dangers

Pleasant Hill, CA/January 13, 2014 — Jennifer Lahl and [The Center for Bioethics and Culture](#), producers of the award-winning [Eggsploitation](#) (2010) and [Anonymous Father's Day](#) (2011), announce the release of their new documentary, *Breeders: A Subclass of Women?*

Women renting their wombs and giving birth to children for immediate delivery to other adults—such as infertile or same sex couples or single adults—have emerged as a distinct class of commercial provider. Women working as surrogates, while frequently motivated to help others wanting a family, are typically paid for their gestational services, most often subject to the terms of commercial contract. Informal agreements can unexpectedly become legal disputes, the outcomes of which are fast defining surrogates as a subclass of women.

Breeders shares the stories of four women and the unexpected consequences and heart-wrenching emotions as they are deprived of their maternal identity and personal autonomy in compensated service to people of greater means.

As the stories of these four women unfold through interviews and commentary, the reflections and opinions of a wide range of industry professionals and feminists are interspersed.

Is the substance of a family simply a matter of love? Or is there a natural and beneficial gestational bond between child and mother? Is surrogacy a “gift of life” or a commodification of women’s bodies and newborns? How does the paid, contracted production of newborns impact their lives? Why do laws regulating surrogacy vary so widely in different states and countries? Are the best interests of the child truly considered in these adult-focused transactions?

Diane Beeson, Professor Emerita of Sociology at California State University says about *Breeders*:

The fascinating documentary raises urgent issues for humanity that transcend existing political divisions. It explores the ramifications of the market’s intrusion into women’s bodies and its inevitable undermining of bodily integrity, human dignity, and autonomy. The film exposes commercial surrogacy’s devaluation of the bond of human gestation and some of the tragic consequences of the deliberate destruction of the primal relationship between newborns and their mothers. Thankfully, the film promises to stimulate a long-overdue expansion of the public debate on this topic.

Showings of the documentary begin with the world premiere on January 27, 2014 at Washburn University Memorial Union in Topeka, Kansas. Viewings are scheduled throughout 2014 in numerous locations. Check the schedule at breeders.cbc-network.org for a screening location near you.

Breeders: A Subclass of Women? is available for purchase at breeders.cbc-network.org.

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Endorsements:

From the idealized view of surrogacy as an altruistic choice to satisfy an infertile couple's longing for a child, *Breeders* moves through the too-often unexamined and disturbing reality of surrogacy. The film takes a compassionate look at the emotional and physical impact on the surrogate, but also, importantly, on the child. *Breeders* is an important new contribution to the dialogue about this unregulated and expanding practice.

Patricia Ireland

*President of the National Organization for Women (NOW), 1991 – 2001,
Author of What Women Want*

Great documentaries move the viewer with simple facts, delivered in first-person accounts. *Breeders* accomplishes this. It offers the facts about the market for eggs and wombs from the lips of the sellers, while it overwhelms you with the human consequences of a trade in human beings.

Helen M. Alvare

*Professor of Law
George Mason University School of Law*

Breeders dares to go where few documentaries have dared yet to take us and where the assisted reproduction/family building industry really doesn't want us to go: the dark heart of surrogacy where women with less financial means are treated like vessels and the children created are products made to fit the adult needs. For anyone who doesn't want to believe that "modern family building" involves contracts, injections, donors, lawyers and payments changing hands, a strong dose of reality and compassion could be salvaged by watching this film.

Claudia Corrigan D'Arcy

Writer, speaker, activist on adoptee rights, and organizer of the Adoptee Rights Coalition. She blogs at [Musings of the Lane](#)

The desire to love a child is a beautiful one and infertility is a heartbreaking pain. As we rush to remake family using all technology available to us, pushing aside wise law, veiling the commodification of life in euphemism, this documentary is an alarming wake-up call. *Breeders* stands athwart this dehumanization yelling Stop! Please, listen to the brave victims of cries of "love" and "hope." Our desires can never justify human servitude.

Kathryn Jean Lopez

Editor-at-large, National Review Online and nationally syndicated columnist

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Breeders takes a hard look at the often unacknowledged bioethical complexities, and individual and societal risks, associated with the global rise of commercial surrogacy. Its thoughtful analysis and interviews with a range of surrogates, family building brokers, and health professionals make important connections between those who purchase assisted reproductive technology services, the poor women who exchange their wombs for cash, and the impact third-party reproduction has on children and families.

Miriam Zoll

Author, Cracked Open: Liberty, Fertility and the Pursuit of High-Tech Babies

Anyone who cares about women, about children, and about human dignity should watch this film. The film hits the economic injustice and personal exploitation of the global surrogacy market with precision and compassion. This movie will awaken your conscience, regardless of where you stand politically. Women aren't breeders, and children aren't products. This film shows us, brilliantly, why that matters to us all."

Russell D. Moore

President

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

Southern Baptist Convention

Those who may doubt the truth of the old adage that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" will have their doubts erased by this remarkable film. It powerfully indicts an industry that promises the infertile the joy of a baby but treats women as breeders and children as products. What began with laudable intentions ushered in a form of dehumanization. Jennifer Lahl has done the nation a great service by drawing attention to it.

Robert P. George

McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in

American Ideals and Institutions

Princeton University

Jennifer Lahl's eye-opening interviews with surrogates, doctors, psychologists, and advocates across the political spectrum explain why surrogacy is either illegal or far more limited in other industrialized countries. Two NOW officials weigh in on the commodification of the financially strapped women who become surrogates and the widely ignored increased risk of maternal death in gestational surrogacy. Surrogates describe medical and emotional nightmares for themselves and the children involved; one who was allowed to visit the child to whom she'd given birth when the little girl was five months old describes finding that the until then constantly colicky infant did nothing but sleep peacefully on the surrogate's chest the whole time she was there. Until then, she says, "I at no point in time thought about how it would affect her." Perhaps most sobering, though, are the words of a young woman who was the result of

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such an arrangement: “Most of the consideration is for the adults” who can afford to effectively buy their children, she says, exploiting both the women hired to bear them and the children whose “foundation of existence is a contract, and money.”

Melinda Henneberger

Washington Post

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In this powerful documentary, surrogacy, perceived as ‘the gift of life’ by many, is exposed for what it really is: a dangerous unequal business transaction between rich people buying a baby and poor women whose bodies and lives are harmed and exploited. Through the diverse stories of four brave women we learn about the heartaches this cruel game of commodifying women as ‘breeders’ causes: to the women who suffer bodily and emotional pain, to the children born of surrogacy who feel abandoned or bought. A must watch for anyone who wants to learn about ‘free’ reproductive slavery 21st century style.

Dr. Renate Klein

A long-time feminist author and critic of reproductive technologies, co-founder of [FINRRAGE](#) (Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering), and former Professor of Women's Studies at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

Breeders is a fascinating film that highlights the many tensions between women's status, the free market demands of the fertility industry, and the fragmentation of women's fertility and reproductive labor. This is a must-see film for all those who care about women and human rights.

Hedva Eyal

*Medical Technologies Policy Researcher and [feminist activist](#)
Israel*

Jennifer Lahl has made a powerful documentary about "surrogacy" as it unfolds in the U.S. for several women with diverse experiences. She, and they, raise many questions that strip the sugar-coating from what may really happen to women and children when babies are made for others.

“Breeders” may strike some as a harsh label for the women who go through a pregnancy for another to whom they will give the babies (if) born. But seeing this film exposes the very problematic aspects of this highly commercialized—and seriously unregulated—global activity that need to be understood to have a true picture of this bit of the “baby business” and parenting. It should be required viewing for all of us, not only those taking part in these exchanges.

Abby Lippman, PhD

Professor Emerita McGill University; Research Associate, Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, and longtime feminist activist with special interests in women's health and women's health policies. She has one foot based in academia and the other, the foot she favors, involves her in social justice and reproductive activism with community groups in Montreal and beyond its borders.

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Diane Beeson

Professor Emerita of Sociology, California State University, East Bay and Associate Director of the [Alliance for Humane Biotechnology](http://allianceforhumanebiotechnology.org).